



Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department

School Health News

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Smoke-Free Homes and Youth Views on Smoking

Are teens more likely to think adults in their town disapprove of smoking if visitors and household smokers are not allowed to smoke inside their own homes? This study examined the relationship of household smoking bans on youths' perceptions about the rates of adult and teen smoking in their own community and about adults' disapproval of teens or other adults smoking. Data from an ongoing study of community-based tobacco control programs on youth smoking were used to address the questions.

Telephone interviews were completed with 3861 adolescents (ages 12-17 years) living in 314 towns in Massachusetts. In this group, 49% lived with at least one adult smoker, but 71% reported living in a household with a smoking ban. In addition, 88% believed that their own parent(s) would disapprove "a lot" if they smoked. Youths living in a household with a smoking ban perceived a lower rate of adult smoking in their town as compared to the youth whose homes did not have such a ban. Youths who lived with a household smoking ban were more likely to also think that adults in their town disapproved of adults and teens smoking. The findings suggest that an adult's action to forbid smoking in the household has an impact on teens that adds strength to parental disapproval of teen smoking.

While this study was limited to one state, promoting household smoking bans in addition to school education and local tobacco control strategies (public smoking ordinances, advertising and restricting youth access to tobacco) may influence teens' views about smoking prevalence and attitudes in their community.

The Lincoln Smoking Regulation Act went into effect on January 1, 2005. For more information please call 441-6225

(Information taken from School Health Alert, October 2005)

